

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION

People can become infected with dangerous diseases in a number of ways. Infection can be passed to people by animals, by other people or by contaminated food or water.

These diseases are called "contagious." When a person comes into contact with a source of infection he or she is considered to be "exposed" to a disease.

Contagious diseases can make people very sick or cause death, so it is important for people to know what can be done to protect them from the spread of diseases.

People who are sick or who may become sick from a dangerous contagious disease need to be separated from others who are not sick so they do not pass the disease on to others. This can be done through the use of **quarantine** and **isolation**.

Quarantine

People who have been exposed to a contagious disease but who may or may not become ill may be put in quarantine. Until it is known if they have caught the disease they may be separated from others who have not been exposed. This is done to prevent the possible spread of the illness. For example, they may be asked to remain at home. They may also receive special care and observation for any early signs of the illness.

If quarantine needs to be large scale several things may happen:

- Voluntary, short-term home curfew.
- Limits on the gathering of groups of people (for example, school events).
- Cancellation of public events.
- Closing of public places (such as theaters).
- Limits on where people can travel (air, rail, water, motor vehicle, pedestrian).
- Closure of mass transit systems.
- Limited access for people to go in and out of a specific area.

Isolation

When someone is known to be ill with a contagious disease, they are placed in isolation. Special precautions are taken to protect people who have not been infected, whether a hospital or in the person's home. . Typically, the ill person will have his or her own room and those who care for him or her will wear protective clothing and take other precautions not to be exposed.

When would quarantine and isolation be used and by whom?

If people in a certain area were potentially exposed to a contagious disease, this is what may happen: State and local health authorities would let people know that they may have been exposed and would tell them where to get medical attention and needed medical tests, or to stay at home to limit their contact with people who have not been exposed to the disease.

Who orders quarantine or isolation?

Only rarely would federal, state or local health authorities issue an "order" for quarantine and isolation. In most cases, quarantine and isolation would be voluntary; however, federal, state and local governments have the authority to require isolation of sick people to protect the public.

The Health Commissioner of the Columbus Health Department has the authority to issue an order of isolation and quarantine for the City of Columbus.

Ohio's Director of Health has the ultimate authority to declare and enforce quarantine and isolation within the border of the State of Ohio.

At the national level, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may detain, medically examine or conditionally release persons suspected of having certain contagious diseases. This authority applies to individuals arriving from foreign countries, on airplanes, trains, automobiles, boats or by foot.

How will I be told of a request or "order" for quarantine and/or isolation?

Most people will learn about requests or "orders" for quarantine and/or isolation through radio, television, newspapers, door-to-door notification, phone messages or the internet. It is important that you listen for and follow directions given by local, State, and Federal officials. By staying calm and carefully following official directions you will help keep yourself and your loved ones safe and healthy.